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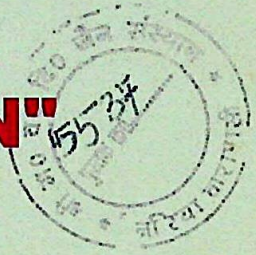
HOW & WHY TO BECOME

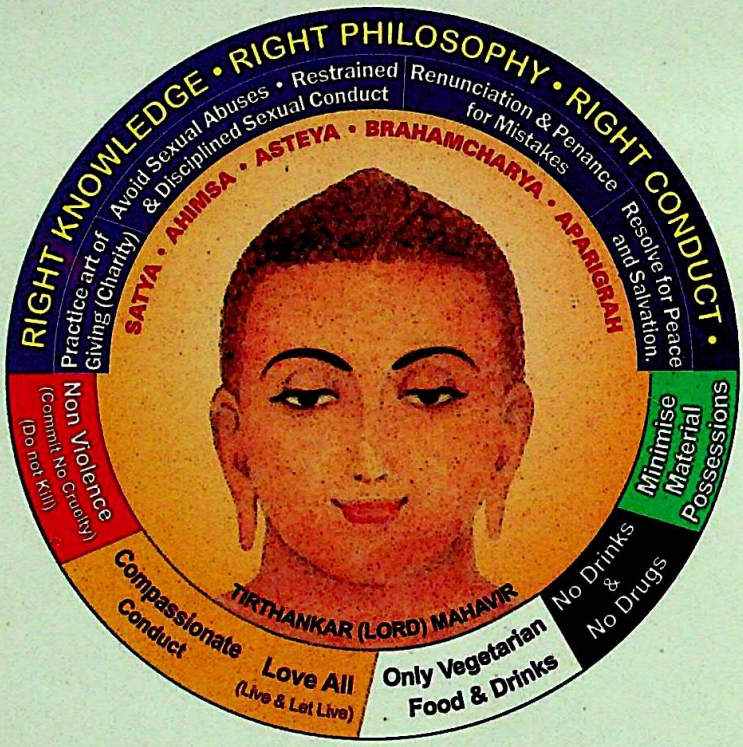
a

"TRUE JAIN"

?



Some Questions about Jainism


RIGHT KNOWLEDGE • RIGHT PHILOSOPHY • RIGHT CONDUCT •
Avoid Sexual Abuses & Disciplined Sexual Conduct • Restrained
Renunciation & Penance for Mistakes
Resolve for Peace and Salvation.
Practice art of Giving (Charity)
SATYA • AHIMSA • ASTEYA • BRAHAMCHARYA • APARIGRAH
Non Violence (Commit No Cruelty) (Do not Kill)
Minimise Material Possessions
No Drinks & No Drugs
Only Vegetarian Food & Drinks
Love All (Live & Let Live)
Compassionate Conduct
TIRTHANKAR (LORD) MAHAVIR

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卐 श्री नवकार महामन्त्र 卐

ॐ

णमो अरिहंताणं। णमो सिद्धाणं। णमो आयरियाणं।
णमो उवज्झायाणं। णमो लोए स्व्वसाहूणं।
एसो पंच णमोक्कारो, सव्व पाव प्पणांसणो,
मंगलाणं च सव्वेसिं, पढमं हवई मंगलं।।

OM

Namo Arihantanam. Namo Sidhanam. Namo Aayariyanam.
Namo Ovjjhayanam. Namo Lo-a-Savsahunam.
Aeso punch Namokaro, Sav Pav Panasano,
Manglanam Ch Savesimh, Padham Hawai Manglam.

FIVE JAINA COMMANDANTS

1) Satya *(Truthfulness)* • 2) Ahimsa *(Non-violence)*
3) Non Stealing *(Asteya)* • 4) Brahmcharya *(Celibacy)*
5) Aparigrah *(Minimise Material Possessions)*

पंच महाव्रतं

सत्य । अहिंसा । अस्तेय । बह्मचर्य । अपरिग्रह

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Some Questions about Jainism

Answered by:-

श्री गo वo दिo जैन संस्थान
पुस्तक क्र.....
553
नरिया वाराणसी

Dr. Rikhab C Jain - Vice President, Veerayatan*

Q 1. Who is the founder of Jainism?

Ans. Jain religion as practiced presently is based on the knowledge base and teachings and preachings of Lord Mahavir, the 24th Tirthankar, about 550 years before the Christ. The origin of Jain religion however actually had its beginning coinciding with the dawn of civilization in India initiated by the 1st Tirthankar Aadinath or Rishab Dev. His son Bharat, the great had founded Bharat Varsh that is today known to the world as "India".

TIRTHANKAR (LORD) MAHAVIR

- **Right Knowledge.**
- **Right Philosophy.**
- **Right Conduct.**
- **Practice art of Giving (Charity).**
- **Avoid Sexual Abuses, Restrained or Disciplined Sexual Conduct.**
- **Renunciation & Penance for Mistakes**
- **Resolve for Peace and Salvation.**

"Every Living being loves his life as you do yours"

* Views expressed are personal views of the author.

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Q2. What does "Jain" means? Is it a family name? Is it a surname? Is it a cast? or a religion?

Ans. Four main religions of the world Vedic or Hindu, Jain, Buddha and Sikhism have originated from India. Other main religions – Jewish, Islam and Christian have originated from Israel and Palestine.

Hinduism and Buddhists, Jainism share a common source of their basic tenets. Jainism is the most refined and reformed version of religious thoughts as yet known to the humanity. Hence the principles of Jainism have universal acceptability. Even the U.N. charter is based on the precincts of Ahimsa, Non violence and Disarmament. So does the Indian constitution.

Q3. What are the basic tenets of Jainism?

Ans. Jainism's tenets are simple, scientific and natural. It recognizes interdependence of every living being – men, women, animals, birds, flies, trees, plants. It commands to live in peace and harmony with each and every interdependent element of nature. Co-existence is the order of the Jainism. It is eco-friendly and pleads for conservation of nature, not its destruction, neither its over exploitation.

Jainism requires to establish friendship with all, enmity with none. In jainism this friendship extends to cover not only human beings, but animals, plants, trees, birds, fish and all living beings - 84 Lacs* species. Hence you can't kill a friend.

It respects the fact that each living being loves its life just as you do yours. Hence "thou shall not kill" – not even for

*10 Lacs = 1 Million

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food. Hence "Ahimsa" or nonviolence: that means live a cruelty free life. Do not kill, do not even think of injuring or harming any living being – by words, deeds or thoughts.

Jainism goes further and explains that one should not even have ill will, envy, or mental intention to harm or injure. Always one should pray for the well being of one self, his family, his friends, his country and of the whole world – infact for the welfare of all living beings in the universe.

Four other main tenets are: truthfulness, not to steal, not to pickup anything without owner's permission, to restrain sexual desires (Preferably abstinence, in case of saints it is a must) and finally to avoid unnecessary collection of material or physical possessions.

Derived from the above five principles, is the need to restrain oneself to vegetarian diet (no meat, no fish & no egg) or vegan diet (not even milk products), no hunting, no animal sacrifice, no sexual indulgence (except in a natural format only with one's wedded spouse), no drinks, no drugs, no gambling/betting.

The graphic with facial drawing of Lord Mahavir on the opening page enumerates and explains all these main tenets of Jainism.

Q 4. How can one survive without meat, fish or egg?

Ans. Veg or vegan diet is a natural diet for human beings. Biologically man's body is not designed to hunt or eat meat say unlike a lion. It is a biological assertion by

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Doctors. Veg/vegan diet ensures good health and reduces the risk of diseases. It helps to have calm mental makeup and friendly behavior. So it is a healthy diet for soul, body and mind.

Elephant, horse, bull and camel are the strongest species in the animal world and all of them are veggies and strong. So it is wrong to say that non veg. food is necessary for physical strength and stamina. Even deer, the smartest and the fastest of species eats only veg. food. No animal gives its consent to kill him for flesh, blood, skin, hides or bones.

Q5. Does Jainism prohibit alcohol and drugs?

Ans. Yes very much. Most of the religions command not to get addicted – not to eat or drink or smoke anything that influences our sensory system and causes loss of sense. Consumption of tobacco, sprits, alcohol, wine, rum, vodka, brandy, cigars, heroin, cocaine, poppies, nicotine, pan masala, drug of any description is strictly prohibited.

Addiction kills soul and body. It dearranges the family life and disturbs normal functioning of the man, family and the society. Infact addiction eventually leads to painful death by picking up dreaded diseases.

Q6. Can you tell us some special beliefs of Jainism as different from Christianity or Islam or Buddhism?

Ans. Yes, Jainism believes in universal brotherhood and calls for a nonviolent living (cruelty free). It specifies followings USPs:-

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i) There can be various routes to achieve salvation. Hence all religions are equally respectful and should be held in as good esteem as one's own religion, be it Jainism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism or Sikhism. Jains call this principle "Sarv Dharma, Sambhav" based on the principle of "Anekantvad". Equal respect and equal obeisance to each and every religion of the world. It does not contradict anyone.

ii) Tolerance is the key word. Don't get provoked or agitated by someone's anger, lust or undesirable words or deeds or thoughts. Instead of getting provoked, forgive the intruder. The Christ when crucified said: "Please forgive my prosecutors. They are ignorant, they do not know what they are doing. So it is in Jainism – Pardon your prosecutor, your intruder and make him your friend. So, did lord Mahavir when harassed by innocent bad elements in the society. He felt sorry for them and pardoned his torturers.

This principle extends to foster communal harmony, avoid interfaith conflicts and helps establish peace, harmony and prosperity.

There can be no war, no use of arms, if communal and interfaith conflicts are avoided. "Live & let live" be followed. Universal friendship can eliminate armed conflicts, terrorism and wars. Co-existence prevails. It is the basic law of the nature.

Q7. Do Jains have their own bible or a separate holy book?

Ans. No, Jainism does not have any bible (a sole or holy book by any name) of its own unlike Islam, Jews and Sikhs.

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Jainism is not a religion based on a single holy book. It is open ended and fully flexible.

Jainism calls for doing the right thing and avoid doing the wrong things, as directed by "Vivek" or one's own conscience.

The conscience based distinction between rights and wrongs is to be done taking into account all the facts, circumstances, demand of the day and the call of the land. But never do an unjust act. You frame your own rules of conduct without conflicting the basic tenets as mentioned before.

Q 8. How do we decide the right conduct?

Ans. Jainism does not insist on following exclusively a holy book or any particular teaching of any lord without judging it to be correct by followers or faithfuls own conscience.

You have a large number of holy source books 'Aggams or Sastras'. Study of these books can help you understand issues better and make you a perfect discriminator between a desirable and an undesirable act.

Jainism relies heavily on acquiring knowledge by self studies and by attending to sermons of learned acharyas and gurus.

The Right knowledge, The Right philosophy – introspective thoughts and the Right conduct are the three main means to solve the riddles of selection between the acceptable words, deeds and thoughts and those to be avoided.

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Q 9. Like Jesus in Christianity do you have "Mahavir" as the fountain head of Jainsim?

Ans. Yes, Mahavir is the fountain head of Jainism, but he is not to be solely worshipped. Mahavir's religion is not centered around any personality. It is centered and driven by virtues. Mahavir never asked to follow him alone or do what he felt as correct. He insisted upon acquiring virtues and knowledge. Make your own decision, but do not flout the rules. You respect and regard virtues as faith has indicted. Mahavir directed against hero worshipping. He insisted to value virtues and pay obesience to virtues and piousness, to one who renounces, to one who achieves higher degree of faithful following of Jain rules, but not only to any one particular Lord, God, saint, acharya, guru, or Tirthankar.

Be your own master. You have to seek your own salvation. Your own freedom from the cycles of rebirth. Your soul can become as pure as that of the god (Parmatma) provided you travel on that path of salvation as checked out by none other than yourself.

Q 10. Can one seek a "boon" from Tirthankara or Lord or acharya?

Ans. No, In Jainism, the Lord (Tirthankar or Parmatma or Bhagwan) does not act. He can't appear and face you. He therefore cannot help or harm. A God or Goddess in Hinduism for instance when pleased by our devotion, believably they can help the devotee or harm those who get them angered. In Jainism the Lord or the guru can bless you only to inspire you to acquire the knowledge

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needed by you for emancipation. Guru, saints and acharya can inspire you for the right path, help you clarify your doubts. But for your own way of salvation you have to study, then compare and judge the path suitable to you for your salvation. You are your own emancipator, your own saviour. No one is needed to broker between you and any god. Self realisation based on your own study of tenets would guide you to the true path.

Q 11. As per Jain faith how one can be free from vices?

Ans. Jainism insists that your worst enemies are well within yourself. These are reflected in your own conduct. These are: anger, lust attachment, greed, and desires including sexual urges, envy and enmity. If you win them by practicing righteous conduct, if you get rid of them you have become pious, stress free, free from worries and competent to persue the path of ultimate salvation. Such a warrior of undesirable human traits is called a "Jin" and hence he is a worthy "true Jain".

Q 12. Does Jainism have any kind of prejudices?

Ans. Not at all. In Jainism, there is no discrimination between race, colour or sex of the layman. All are equal. All kind of prejudices are to be shunted off. Caste, religion or region or domiciliary status is not to be a discriminatory factor. This equality is observed not only amongst human beings but amongst all creatures of nature. Thus Jainism even accords equal treatment to animals, plants, trees, all kind of living beings in any form of life – all of them are considered equal to man. This is the beauty of the Jaina faith.

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Q 13. Is it true that Jainism initiates path of renunciation and restrictions only, instead of acting as a guide to live better? Live happier?

Ans. No, it is not true. The above fact applies to monks and nuns. Householders – Men, Women can pursue for a better happier life – if they follow the tenets of Jainism they may be forbidden to eat non veg and some veg items as well and say no to drinks and drugs and to be cautious not to undertake undesirable activities in one's conduct. In fact, such a code of conduct itself avoids one to tread the forbidden path leading to sorrows. It always helps one to confine to virtuous and the rightest path. Such a course would certainly help make life stress free and bring mental peace and harmony. It may not, of course help you become a passive rich possessively. But happiness and satisfaction is guaranteed. Excessive possessions are the root cause of unhappiness in life. It never adds to happiness in your life. Just as a room filled with hundreds of material objects causes you lot of strain and worries of theft, of maintenance, of their being damaged etc. so does excessive possession cause stress and strain.

Jainism does not, as normally thought of, prohibit creation of wealth or prohibit undertaking agricultural or industrial activities. Of course it does not and it cannot permit to acquire wealth by impure or wrong means. Purity of means is a "must". Enormous accumulated wealth even if acquired by righteous means it should never be spent on showering luxuries for oneself or one's dear ones, it should be completely tendered for the cause of the poor and needy of the society. It is like what

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Warren Buffet, Rockefeller, Ford, Microsoft Boss Bill Gates, Azim Premji, Narayana Murthy and many others are doing. Facebook Boss Mark Zuckerberg recently donated 99% of his wealth on the occasion of the birth of his first daughter.

The true Jain persuades a happier, harmonious and peaceful cruelty free life. This causes a higher order of life strata in the next birth and may ultimately allow to get rid of the "cycle of rebirth" that is "moksha" or becoming one with the sidha, the budha, the mukta.

Q 14. Who is a Jain? One born to Jain parents or one who practices Jainism.

Ans. True Jain is one who believes and practices five principles of Jainism. Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, Martin King Luther, Nelson Mandela, Bernard Shaw, Dalai Lama and many such great personalities belong to other religions by birth but they can be considered as true Jain as they have lived and inspired to live a cruelty free life – based on Ahimsa or non violence. On the other hand there are many men and women born to Jain parents but they have deviated from the path of Jaina faith, hence they can never be called "Jain". We must see that such deviation should be reduced as much as possible by helping them to return to the Jaina order of life.

Q 15. How a non Jain can become a Jain?

Ans. Jainism don't believe in conversion, not the least by force or inducement. Historically many Jain acharyas, saints monks, nuns, thirnkaras were always drawn and even today many continue to come from non Jain families.

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One has to practice jaina way of living. No conversion, no diksha, no samkit, no baptism of any kind is called for.

You can even practice Ahimsa (non violence) or cruelty free living while continuing to be free to remain in your own family's faith, however subject to jaina correction.

Your righteous deeds need to be appreciated, not the label of your faith, not even your verbal assertion. Actual conduct counts and nothing else can change your life – make it happier and stress free.

Q 16. How Jain beliefs can be considered scientific?

Ans. Beliefs in Jainism are largely scientifically correct. Scientists have proved that trees and plants have life, that matter can be dissected into atoms protons and neutrons, that water, air, earth, fire and space is full of smallest invisible living beings in infinity, that millions of "genes" constitute the body, that sound and light travels and that there is a "god particle" etc. There are hundreds of references and statements in Jain shastras that scientific research is revealing to be true. In coming decades with advancement of science and technology many more jain beliefs may be scientifically confirmed to be correct.

Q 17. How Jains and believers in Ahimsa can ensure their sons and daughters to fallow Jainism?

Ans. First of all every parent has to demonstrate to their siblings that they themselves do really fully believe and follow Jaina faith in deed. That is enough.

However to take some initiative, let them visit temples and attend discourses. Allow them to read books and

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literature concerning religion, ethics, morality, law, spirituality Jainism, and study of thoughts of great preachers. Let them study holy books of other religions as well. Let them study teachings and thoughts of the wise persons in the history. Let them compare Jainism with other religions. Let them discover the truth.

Let them discover that Jainism agrees with all the teachings of all religions. Jainism just adds some more valuable virtues and lays emphasis on higher degree of adherence of some of the common virtues such as truth, nonviolence, limiting material possessions etc.

If possible let them attend vacation camps. Clarify their questions, queries etc. In any case never force them to do it. Let them make their own choice by reason. It should not be imposed.

It may be a good idea to install facilities offering permitted food and drink outlets in abundance. Also create a convenient atmosphere to follow Jaina way of life so that harshness or exterior considerations may not tend to tempt youngsters to defy jaina norms. In Jainism, dietary restrains concerning food and drinks is the supreme adherence requirement from each jain follower.

Q 18. What does Jainism prescribe for saving the earth and the environment?

Ans. Jainism's all principles are just in tandem with the nature. It advocates minimisation of use of natural resources, replenishments and recycling of natural resources. This is being eco friendly, nature friendly. No cutting of trees is permitted. It is considered a sin. Jainism even discourages

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use of live flowers and leaves. It argues to take care of vegetation and nature and not to harm or inflict injuries by cutting or plucking. Harmonising our life with the nature is the main objective.

Q 19. Is Jainism a part of Hindu religion as is commonly felt?

Ans. Jainism is an independent well established well recognized religion in its own right. However it shares and is one with Hinduism, Budhism, Sikhism on most of the matters concerning general conduct of citizens. Common knowledge source and common heritage, common culture make these religions co-religions. Differences are mostly in the mode of prayers, rites, rituals and certain assumptions. Such sectoral variations do persist even within different segments in each sect in each of these religions.

Q 20. How Jainism can be the key to the future of humanity?

Ans. Non violence and co-existence are the two main factors that can guarantee world peace and happier humanity. Disarmament and poverty elimination are much needed endorsements by Jain philosophy. Conservation of natural resources and eco-friendliness is ordained. Religion by any other name can never contradict or ignore these basic beliefs in the existing world neither today nor tomorrow.

Q 21. Finally what are "do's" and "donots" for true Jain householder – a fine beliver and practitioner of Jainism?

Ans. Just do the right things and never do anything that is wrong. This you should decide by your own conscience

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or vivek. Vivek is dharma in Jainism. You may see list of "do's" and "donot do's" mentioned in the graphic presentation on the opening page.

Q 22. Why children born to Jain parents should adopt Jainism?

Ans. If one aims to inherit wealth, assets and properties of the Jain family then they should inherit Jainism as well. No family has as yet existed which owns wealth and assets valuable even equal to a millionth part of the invaluable heritage of Jain knowledge base. No comparison. Jaina literature, art, holy books, architecture, temples, idols, sthanaks the cultural evolution and so on are considered common heritage. So, sons and daughters of Jain parents should naturally adhere to Jainism by choice and accept it as god's gift by birth.

Being born as a human being owes its cause in doing a great good deed in the previous life. Being born in a faithful Jain family is considered as a cause of an exceptional "punya" or "prarabdha" resultant of any outstanding noble sacrifice or firmness in Jain like beliefs against all odds in the previous life.

So, each and every jain sibling must adhere to Jainism. "Jainam Jayati Sasanam". – Let Jainism be the order of the day.

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JAINISM'S
GLOBAL INITIATIVES FOR WORLD PEACE

1. To propagate universally, in each country virtues of Non violence and its necessity for world peace. High profile Politicians, Academicians, Military Brass, Advocates, Scientists, Administrators, actors ought to know the importance of non violence for ensuring world peace. They ought to maintain their "cool".
2. Observe Non-Violence Day on 2nd October every year as proclaimed by UNO. All votaries of non violence, Jains in particular should use this celebration as an important means for spreading the ideals of Ahimsa and Jainism.
3. Organise a highly efficient and comprehensive on line resource library on Jainism, non violence, peace, disarmament, universal brotherhood, environmental issues, antiterrorism etc. so that media can have free access to photo gallery and file reports, studies, articles, write ups to enable Press as well as audio visual media to cover such matters and help serve the cause.
4. A comprehensive distribution organisation for books, magazines CD/DVD etc. on Jainology and related subjects. Existing distribution system for all such publications and media information is almost non-existent.
5. Organise Public campaigns, Road shows, Talks, Debates, Painting Competitions to update youth in each city in each and every country. We ought to increase such coverage.

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6. Co-ordinate functioning of like minded sister organizations and exchange knowledge base and help each other in carrying programmes. Swaminarains, Radhaswamis, Nam Dhari Sikhs, Arya Samaj's, Vaishnavs, Kabirpanthis, Iskcons and similar communities practicing Vegetarianism and Ahimsa must jointly work in co-ordinated manner on such issues. It is more important in overseas countries.
7. Organise effectively an "International Ahimsa (Non-violence)" Academy to help train peace and non-violence volunteers.
8. Increase number of veg and vegan outlets of all categories and also popularize these outlets. Iskcon is doing good work in this field.

   Making available such veg and vegan products and food easily accessible everywhere should be the main objective. The moto should be:

Say No to	⇨	Non Veg
Say No to	⇨	Drugs & Drinks
Say No to	⇨	Junk Food
Say No to	⇨	Veg-Non Veg Mixed Kitchen
Say No to	⇨	Smoking

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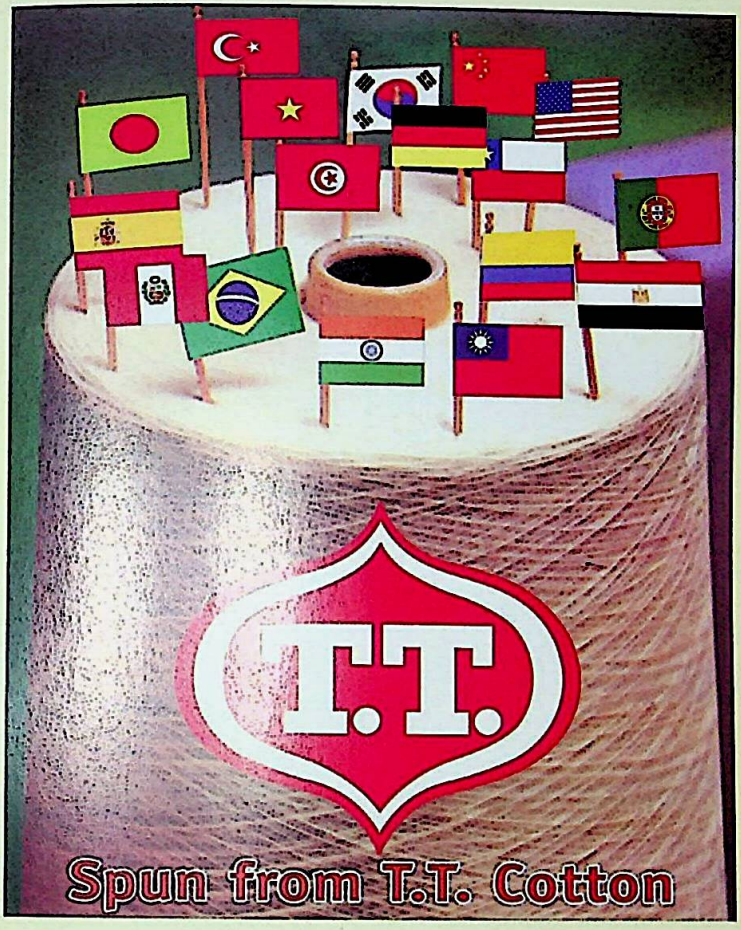
WORLD CLASS YARN



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वीरायतन

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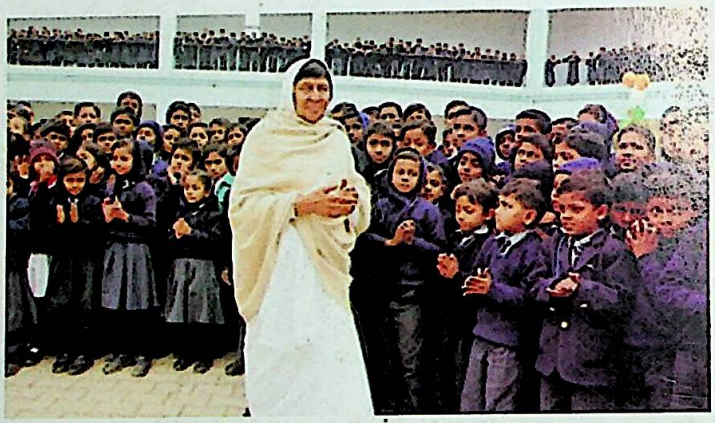
For more details come and seek blessings of



Holy Mother Acharya Chandna Ji

VEERAYATAN: Rajgir, District-Naland-803 116, Bihar (INDIA)
E-mail: veerayatanbihar@gmail.com • Web.: www.veerayatanbihar.org

Ganesh Varni Digambar Jain Institute, Naria, Varanasi